

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MEETING

Minutes

June 18, 2015

Commission Members Present:

Genevieve Walker-Lightfoot
Ivette Lopez
Bianca Chang
Frank V. Eastham, Jr.
Catherine Hyde
Opel T. Jones, I
Rev. Turner
H. Taylor Walls
Giovanna Guarnieri

Commission Members Absent:

Ilene Kessler
Tim Johnson

Staff:

Stephanie M. Chapple, Recording Secretary
Dr. Barbara J. Sands, OHR Administrator
Barry Sanders, HRC Legal Counsel

1. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting was called to order at 7:09 pm.

2. PUBLIC FORUM – Cheryl Brower, OHR Investigator attended the meeting.

3. HRC CASES UPDATE – LEGAL COUNSEL – HRC denied appeal for 15-05-003 and 15-05-004

4. APPROVE MINUTES

May meeting minutes were approved.

5. CHAIR'S REPORT – Genevieve spoke briefly and shared her concerns about the Legislative Session where she gave testimony. Gen also confirmed she would like to serve another term. Gen had several question regarding her re-appointment; Dr. Sands confirmed she will follow up with those questions by next Tuesday.

6. COMMITTEES/ REPORTS

- *Finance and Fair Lending – Genevieve* – No report.
- *Legislation – Ivette and Genevieve* – Ivette reviewed legislation on state's website, however there were no updates, and nothing as it relates to human rights.
- *Education & Community Outreach – Frank, Rev. Turner* – Rev. Turner will be on sabbatical in July and August, returning to the regularly scheduled HC meetings in September. The African American Roundtable has partnered with the Police Department to host a community collaborative event specifically intended for residents in the Long Reach Village community on Sat., 6/20 at St. John Baptist Church. This is an open forum intended to facilitate community conversation between the Police Dept. and community members to enhance community policing. This program will serve as a pilot and introduction to all village centers in hopes that other village communities will also host similar collaborations in being proactive with community policing. Frank will forward names of presenters from Howard County Board of Education re. Cultural Proficiency presentation at July meeting.
- *Law Enforcement – Opel & Tim* – No report.
- *HRC Awards Program – Ivette and Bianca* – Ivette and Bianca will meet with Stephanie this month to finalize plans for upcoming awards program, finalize introduction draft letter to community organizations, etc. Additionally, updates to nomination form will be given to Stephanie for website.
- *Human Trafficking Task Force* – No report.
- LGBTQ Committee – Catherine* – Two members from PFLAG along with Catherine met with the Howard County Police Department Diversity Officer. Catherine and another member from PFLAG also met with Dr. Sands prior to the tonight's meeting to discuss concerns with the person holding this position. Catherine and Gen have targeted the September meeting to invite the Police Chief. An initial meeting with the Police Chief, Genevieve, and Dr. Sands will be planned prior to September. Governor Hogan did not sign the legislation nor veto changes in the gender marker. This requirement is now removed, and goes into effect in October. October is LGBT History Month, Catherine would like to conduct updated training for Transgender issues.
- *Housing – Ivette and Ilene* – No report.
- *Aging & Disability Matters – Bianca, Genevieve* – No report
- *Health Care Access – Bianca* – Free training (Verbal De-Escalation of Agitation: Strategies to Create Safe and Respectful Environments) sponsored by Bureau of Behavioral Health at the Howard County Health Dept., 7/29, 11a – 4p. More information will follow.
- *Student Life (New Committee) Taylor* – Taylor and Dr. Sands will meet within the next few weeks to discuss initiatives for Student Life committee as it relates to those students who applied for the HRC Student position. Additionally, Taylor, Genevieve and Opel thanked Giovanna for her work serving as Student Commissioner. Taylor invited Giovanna to

continue to serve on the Student Life committee. Giovanna expressed her interest in continuing to serve in some capacity if her schedule allows.

7. STUDENT REPORT – No report.

8. STAFF REPORT/UPDATES – MAHRA will host a Commissioners' Training in October. Dr. Sands is encouraging all Commissioners to register to participate. Confirmed date for this training will be forwarded to everyone via email. Dr. Sands gave summary of "The New Black" documentary held on June 9th. 56 people attended; event was partnered with PFLAG, Christ Unitarian Methodist Church, and UU Columbia. Next showing will be on July 14th at the Gary Arthur Community Center in Cooksville, Md. Stephanie will forward more information. OHR Investigators will receive additional training from Office of Law, OHR Intake Investigator also receiving additional training. Second meeting was held this summer for MLK Commission; OHR is working on project "African American Pioneers in Howard County" with Howard County citizens and those interested. Participants met and began organizing plans and initiatives to share historical elements, names and families in Howard County who have been forgotten. OHR is also working with PFLAG and the LGBT community on various projects. The Maryland Civil Rights Coalition is now being formed. Please contact Dr. Sands if you are interested in serving. The next meeting is June 24th, 10a, Gateway Building, 1st Floor. Many high school students have submitted applications to serve as Student Commissioner on the HRC. Deadline was today at 5 p.m. Dr. Sands will meet with Taylor to discuss plans to involve these students in human rights initiatives within their schools and throughout their community. An introduction gathering and kick-off is tentatively planned for the 1st Thursday after Labor Day – Thursday, September 10th. Please see Dr. Sands Executive Report for OHR cases and Hate Bias case numbers received from the Howard County Police Department.

9. NEW BUSINESS – Genevieve thanked Giovanna for her work on the Commission, and presented her with a card signed by all members. Gen and Commissioners have encouraged Giovanna to continue to serve on the Commission or continue to be involved with HRC projects in some capacity. In April 2016, Stephanie will announce tentative date of news release for HRC Student position in the event the current student serving is interested in serving a second term.

10. ANNOUNCEMENTS/UPDATES – The Police Department's "Coffee with a Cop" continues with additional dates this summer. Stephanie will forward dates and locations for July and August.

II. ADJOURNMENT – Meeting adjourned at 9:50 p.m.